



## Laying Sod in dormant season

I received several questions this fall about how or when to lay sod. Many folks have asked if they can lay sod in the winter to help with soil erosion.

Dormant sodding is when you lay sod that is not actively growing. Preventing soil erosion during the winter can be tricky. Erosion can be controlled with dormant turf, but the risk of winter kill is possible with turf that has not had a chance to root in. Most warm season grasses will retain root activity to 50 degrees Fahrenheit. However, when root growth slows and temperatures drop, turfgrass is more susceptible to freeze damage. The risk of freeze damage depends on the variety. Bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, and buffalograss are most tolerant of freeze damage, but can still be killed. It is important to be aware of the potential risks and consequences prior to investment in resources.

### Basic management Guidelines

#### Fertilizer use:

In general, fertilizer use is not recommended. Dormant roots may be incapable of taking up nitrogen and if they do they it will stimulate top growth that will burn in freeze and further damage the root system.

#### Pesticide Use:

Do not apply any herbicide that may interfere with root establishment. Pre-emergent should not be applied because it can inhibit root development.

#### Water Management:

The upper 1 -2 inches of soil must be kept moist, but not saturated. If left unattended dormant turfgrass can easily dry out in as little as a day. Irrigate as needed in addition to rain or snow fall. It will be difficult to determine root establishment and health of the turf until spring.

As always, please give me a call if you need assistance.

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